

SAC-VALLEY NEWS

SVWQC actions, accomplishments, and updates

1.1+ MILLION IRRIGATED ACRES

7300+ PARTICIPANTS

12 SUBWATERSHEDS

INMP Grower Self-Certification Training Now 100% ONLINE!

The Coalition is excited to announce that as of September 2022, the Irrigation and Nitrogen Management Self-Certification Training and Exam are available to be completed 100% online. After successfully completing the training and passing the exam, growers will become eligible to self-certify their INMP Worksheets. As a reminder, the certification requirement of the Worksheet applies to Members with parcels in high vulnerability areas (HVAs) for nitrogen. Although all Members are welcome to take the **FREE** training. Growers can access the online training at www.svwqc.org under *Outreach and Education*.

Coalition 2023 Budget Process Begins

The Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) Management Advisory Committee (MAC) met on Tuesday, August 23 to 1) review the 2023 deliverables required by the Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) General Order for the Coalition to meet its obligations under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program; 2) review the preliminary 2023 Budget, which is approximately \$400,000 less than the 2022 Budget; and 3) discuss initiatives to meet the Coalition's Goals and Priorities. One of the initiatives the MAC agreed to pursue is to determine if coordinating Coalition invoicing and reporting schedules and consolidating administrative, education, and outreach functions will result in cost efficiency for Coalition Members.

The MAC will finalize the 2023 Budget in October.



The latest in this issue:

2022 PARTICIPANT LIST

UPDATE ON DRINKING WATER WELL SAMPLING

SUCCESS STORY!

REGIONAL BOARD ENFORCEMENT

GROUNDWATER QUALITY PROTECTION FORMULAS, VALUES, AND TARGETS

AND MORE!

MEMBER INFORMATION

- EXTREME CAUTION NEEDED TO AVOID FUTURE MANAGEMENT PLANS.

2022 Participant List

Submitted to the Regional Board on August 1, 2022

In July of each year, the Coalition prepares and submits an annual participant list to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board), which is an accounting of all active members, irrigated acres, and dropped members for the entire Coalition (12 Subwatersheds). This is a Regional Water Board requirement for all Agricultural Water Quality Coalition Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR), except the California Rice Commission. Generating a Coalition-wide participant list is a major undertaking each year requiring coordination between staff of each of the 12 Subwatersheds and the NCWA consultant team led by Chelsie Bryden, Program Coordinator for the Coalition.

The Importance of the Participant List

Among other things, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) uses the Participant list to generate the Coalition's bill for the State Oversight Fee, which is paid directly to State Board at a per acre fee (\$1.04 for irrigated pasture with no external nitrogen inputs and \$1.29 for all other crops). The information is also used to inform Regional Board enforcement actions to ensure 100% compliance with the ILRP. This includes enforcement for late or missing annual reports and/or members dropped for non-payment, non-responsiveness, or other unknown reasons. Perhaps most importantly, the participant list demonstrates that a large majority of landowners in the Sacramento Valley are in compliance with state regulations and seek to be responsible and responsive to the best of their ability.

2022 Enrollment Summary

According to the 2022 Participant List, the Coalition comprises of 7,351 landowners encompassing 21,947 APNs and **1,170,495 irrigated acres**. Enrolled acreage in the Coalition remains fairly even when compared to 2021, despite the many hardships growers faced in the past year including economic uncertainty and drought. Small, family farms continue to make up a majority of the Coalition's membership, with over 50% of enrolled APNs at **less than** 25 irrigated acres. Less than 15% of enrolled APNs are enrolled with **greater than** 100 irrigated acres. Programmatic elements often require the Coalition to place acreage and Subwatersheds into 2 categories: those with nitrogen high vulnerability areas (HVAs) on the Valley Floor and those with no HVAs and reduced surface water monitoring in Reduced Monitoring Option (RMO) Subwatersheds. The participant list showed that as expected, a vast majority, 89%, of enrolled acreage is located on the Valley Floor with 11% located in an RMO Subwatershed.

2021 Crop Year Reporting Summary

Completion of 2021 Crop Year reporting by Members was impressive across the Coalition. At the time of the 2022 Participant List submission on August 1, under 340 operators had failed to report, a stark difference when compared to 2020 Crop Year reporting with over 800 outstanding reports at the time of the submission of the Participant List. Members who have not completed their 2021 Crop Year reporting should do so as soon as possible to avoid potential fines.

THANK YOU to members who responsibly maintain their good standing and to staff at all levels who assist these members in meeting the requirements of the ILRP.

SUCCESS STORY!

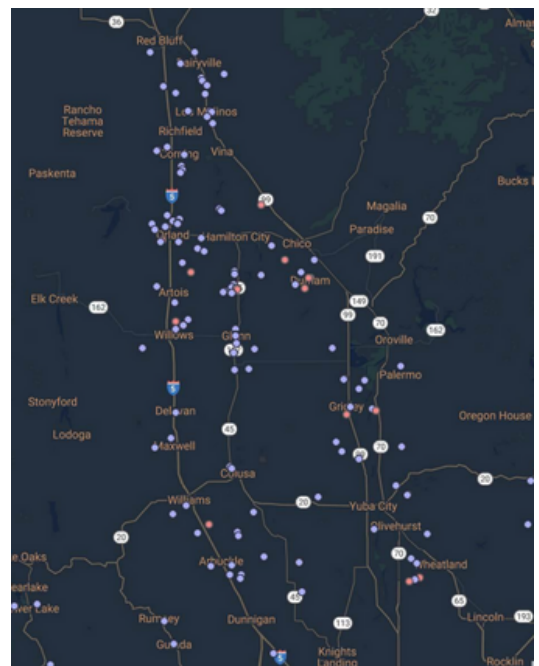
Irrigated Agriculture Completion of Implemented Management Plans

On 7 July 2022, the Executive Officer approved the completion of a chlorpyrifos surface water management plan in the Gilsizer Slough drainage of the Coalition. The implemented management plan successfully eliminated the water quality problem caused or influenced by the discharge of agricultural pollutants into surface receiving waters. The Coalition held multiple member meetings and conducted targeted outreach to individual growers to provide general and site-specific guidance regarding practices to protect water quality. Examples of increased practices implemented by growers include reducing use of chlorpyrifos; following pesticide application practices; implementing cultural practices to manage sediment and erosion; implementing irrigation management to reduce runoff water volume; and maintaining buffers between treated areas and water bodies. Water quality analyses showed that receiving water limits were met, demonstrating the effectiveness of implemented practices. Furthermore, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation banned the use of chlorpyrifos by agriculture beginning January 1, 2021.

Under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP), a Management Plan is triggered when water samples from a monitoring site are tested and a constituent is detected at a concentration that exceeds its appropriate water quality limit two times within a 3-year period. This requires the development of a Management Plan by the Coalition and implementation of improved management practices by member growers. Implementation is deemed successful and complete when the Coalition demonstrates: (1) at least three years of compliance with receiving water limitations; (2) documentation of third-party education and outreach to growers; (3) documentation of implemented improved management practices; and (4) demonstration of management practice effectiveness.

Update: On-Farm Active Drinking Water Well Sampling Results in the Sacramento Valley

As of January 2022, Members of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition are required to annually sample **active** drinking water wells on **ENROLLED** parcels. Eight months into the new requirement, 230 Members have completed their sampling requirement encompassing 439 active drinking water wells. Of the wells sampled, 51 wells exceeded the drinking water standard of 10 mg/L as N for nitrate + nitrite. Analyses of these samples must be performed by an ELAP-certified lab capable of uploading data to Geotracker. To the right is an image of how sampling data are displayed on Geotracker. Blue points indicated samples below the 10mg/L N limit. Red points indicate wells above the 10 mg/L N limit. *For more information on this program, please reach out to your Subwatershed.*



2023 Surface Water Quality Monitoring Plan Submitted

On August 1, Larry Walker Associates (LWA) submitted the DRAFT 2023 Monitoring Plan Update (MPU) that is required annually by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board). The Draft MPU is reviewed by Regional Board staff who might modify it, changing slightly the overall monitoring for each Subwatershed. The MPU may also change if additional follow-up monitoring is required due to any exceedances that may be observed from now through the end of the 2022 Monitoring Year (September).

The 2023 Monitoring Year will be a non-assessment year, so the Coalition is only required to conduct Management Plan monitoring, follow-up monitoring for exceedances, TMDL monitoring, and quarterly monitoring at Integration Sites. **Most of the Coalition's monitoring sites in each Subwatershed have very little required monitoring**, the exception being the three Butte-Yuba-Sutter sites with Pyrethroid Pesticide Management Plans that have to follow the monitoring schedule outlined in their respective Management Plans.

The number of sampling events – 57 in total for 2023 is significantly less than what was required in the last non-Assessment year (2021) when pyrethroid monitoring and every fifth-year monitoring was required in the five (5) Reduced Monitoring areas in the Upper Watershed areas of the Coalition.

Regional Board Enforcement and Compliance Action

Between March 1 and June 30, the Regional Water Board staff sent 38 dropped-member directive letters to landowners and 206 Notices of Violation (NOVs) to Coalition members for their failure to submit the Irrigation and Nitrogen Management Plan Summary Reports by the Board-approved deadlines. The Directive letters were sent to members dropped from the Coalitions' participant lists and may include members with unpaid dues. The Directive requires the recipients to re-enroll with a Third-Party group within 15 days of receipt of the letter. Coalition Members who did not respond to the Regional Board reminder letters were issued NOVs urging them to promptly provide their reports to their respective coalitions or potentially face monetary penalties. The Enforcement and Compliance is summarized as part of the [Executive Officer's Report the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board](#) prepared for the six Board meetings a year.

Regional Board Executive Officer Report

August 2022

The Executive Officer gave the Annual Update on Programs starting at the 1 hour 24-minute mark of the [August Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board meeting](#). In 2020 the Central Valley Regional Board undertook an update of its [Strategic Plan](#) in which the Coalition participated and commented on, specifically in support of the *Adaptive Prioritization - Tailoring Permits, Enforcement and Planning Based on Threat to Water Quality* (Pages 13-14). On Page 12 of the Strategic Plan is a section on *Compliance and Enforcement*.

DRYWELL RESOURCES

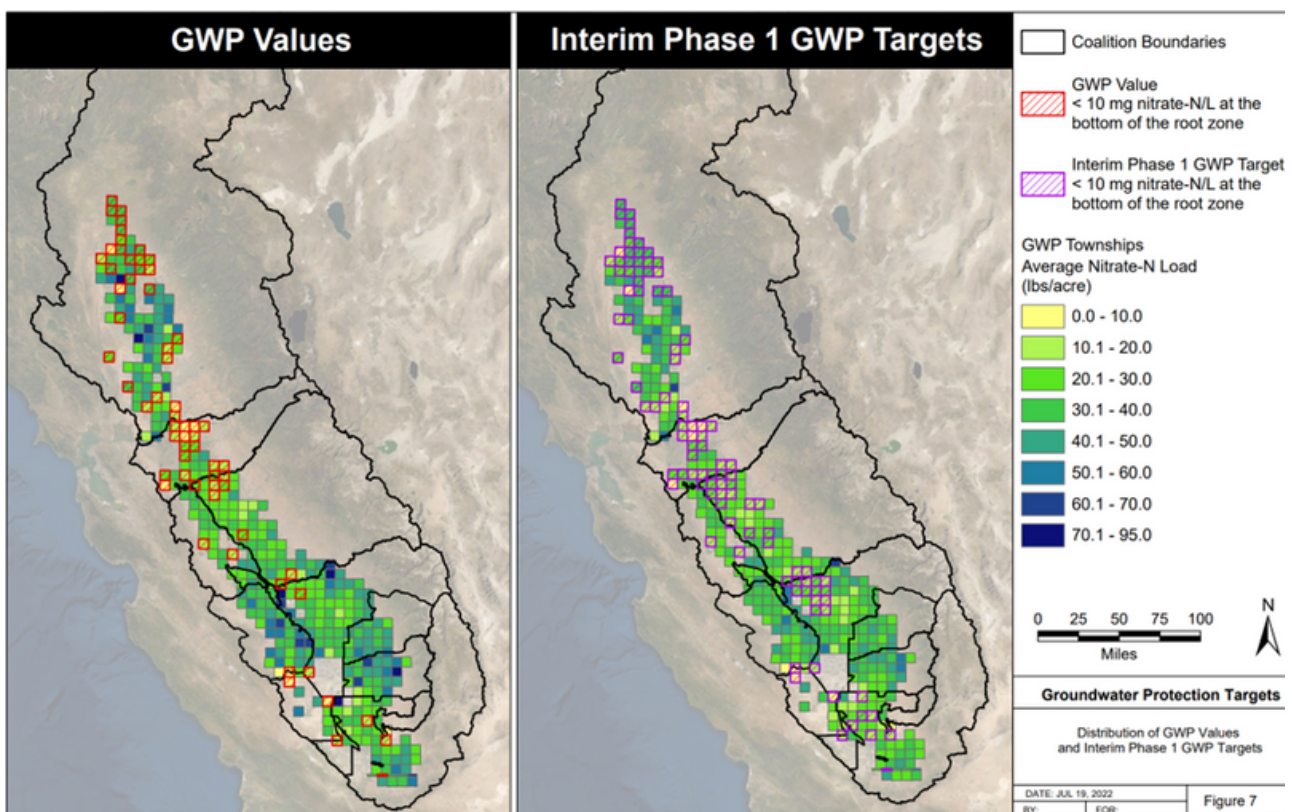
The NCWA North State Drinking Water Solutions Small Group Action Team has been meeting throughout the year to ensure resources are available to landowners experiencing dry wells. Here is the link to the [August 5 North State Drinking Water Solutions Network Presentations](#).

Groundwater Quality Protection Values and Targets

The comment period for Groundwater Quality Protection Targets submitted on behalf of the 13 Central Valley Agricultural Water Quality Coalitions with this requirement in their WDRs ends September 12. The California Rice Commission does not have this requirement.

These targets are generated for Townships with High Vulnerability Areas (HVAs) for nitrates potentially impacting groundwater as identified in the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition’s (Coalition) 2016 Groundwater Quality Assessment Report and they utilize Irrigation and Nitrogen Management Plan (INMP) reporting numbers generated by Coalition Members. The Targets are generated from the [Groundwater Quality Protection Values](#) submitted in July 2021 to the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Targets are non-regulatory in nature but intended to ensure the protection of groundwater which is a source of drinking water.

As shown below Values and Targets are already being achieved for many Townships in the Sacramento Valley compared to the East side of the San Joaquin Valley, Kern River Watershed and Tulare Lake region.



The results of this work along with the INMP, on-farm drinking water well testing results and the Groundwater Quality Trend Monitoring results should begin to provide the Regional Board with the understanding that nitrate in groundwater is of limited concern related to drinking water.



Coalition Member Information Hub



ATTENTION!

EXTREME CAUTION NEEDED WHEN APPLYING PYRETHROIDS

Pyrethroid insecticides continue to be detected in the Coalition's surface water quality monitoring. So far this year detection of pyrethroids in Lower Honcut Creek (Butte County), Lower Snake River (Sutter County), Pine Creek (Butte County), and Freshwater Creek (Colusa County) have resulted in exceedances of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program trigger limit for these insecticides. Because pyrethroids are extremely toxic to aquatic invertebrates they have very low trigger limits.

The Coalition is required by the Central Valley Water Board to test both the water column and the sediment for potential toxicity using the bioindicator species, *Hyalella azteca*. Exceedances have been observed in both water column and sediment samples and, in some cases, Management Plans have been triggered which result in additional costs for Coalition Members in the Subwatershed where the exceedances occur. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BE EXTRA CAUTIOUS DURING APPLICATION SEASON TO AVOID MORE EXCEEDANCES AND ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT PLANS.** Management Plans equate to extra costs and time for members in the form of increased surface water monitoring for a minimum of three years, mandatory meetings, and additional reporting of management practices by members. Avoiding mandated Management Plans is a critical component of cost containment so let's work together to avoid them!

By the conclusion of the 2022 monitoring year (October 2021–September 2022), a total of 50 water-column pyrethroid pesticide samples will be collected across 13 monitoring sites. To date, nine of these samples, which consider the sum of detected concentrations of the six target pyrethroid pesticides, exceeded one or both (chronic and acute) prohibition triggers. Single exceedances were observed at four sites, two exceedances were observed at one site, and three exceedances were observed at one site. Nine samples were collected in August 2022, but results have not been reported by the laboratory. Six samples are planned for collection in September 2022.

General Questions

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